

Are mediation and impartial hearing decisions final?

If you don't agree with the mediation or impartial hearing decision, you can appeal by writing a letter to the Department of Health. You have 30 days to appeal the decision.

The Department of Health will assign an impartial review officer to examine the mediation or hearing record and ask additional questions, if necessary.

The review officer will then make a written decision within 30 days. If you still do not agree with the decision, you have 30 days to bring a civil action in State or Federal Court.

Send your written request for mediation or impartial hearing to:

Early Intervention Policy Coordinator
Rhode Island Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill, Room 302
Providence, RI 02908



MAKE HEART PART OF YOUR FAMILY
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Resolving Disagreements



early intervention

supporting families and child development



How does Early Intervention work with your family?

The Early Intervention Program (EI) helps families identify problems and offers solutions. Children in the Program do best when families and Program staff work together.

It is important for you to talk with Early Intervention staff about your child and any concerns you have regarding the Program and the services your child is receiving.

What should I do if I disagree with my child's plan or the decisions made by the Program staff?

There may be times when you will not agree with something the Early Intervention Program wants to do or has done. For example, you may not agree with:

- ♦ The results of your child's evaluation.
- ♦ The information in your child's record.
- ♦ The need to share information about your child with other agencies.
- ♦ Other issues regarding the services your child receives through the Program.

If you do not agree, the first thing you should do is to talk to your service coordinator or the program director about the problem.

Early Intervention parent consultants are available to offer support as you try to solve your problems. All parent consultants have a child who has been through Early Intervention.

If you cannot solve the problem by talking with the service coordinator or director, you can choose to solve the problem through mediation or through an impartial hearing.

What is mediation?

Mediation is a process that helps you and the Early Intervention staff solve a disagreement. The process uses a person who does not work for the Department of Health or the Early Intervention Program, but is familiar with the Program. Both you and the Early Intervention staff must agree to the mediation process.

To begin the process, call the Family Health Information Line at 1-800-942-7434. You may also put your request in writing and send it to the Department of Health at the address listed in this brochure.

You will be contacted within 14 days to set a date and a time for a mediation meeting. The mediator may talk with you before the meeting. If at any time you are not happy with the mediation process, you can stop the process and request an impartial hearing.

What is an impartial hearing?

An impartial hearing is a more formal way to solve a disagreement. At an impartial hearing, a hearing officer will listen to all sides of the complaint. You have the right to have your lawyer present at the hearing. Your child can continue to receive Early Intervention services during the process.

To request an impartial hearing, call the Family Health Information Line at 1-800-942-7434. You may also put your request in writing and send it to the Department of Health at the address listed in this brochure.

Within 10 days you will receive a letter stating that a hearing officer has been assigned. The hearing officer will call you to set a date and time for the hearing.

Within 30 days of the hearing, the hearing officer will mail a written decision to you and the Early Intervention Program. The decision will be made public, but the information identifying you and your family will be removed.

